

Message

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Sent: 2/13/2018 7:25:14 PM
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Subject: FW: Wolverine clips, Feb. 13, 2018

From: Lippert, Allison

Sent: Tuesday, February 13, 2018 1:03 PM

To: Lippert, Allison <lippert.allison@epa.gov>; Bassler, Rachel <Bassler.Rachel@epa.gov>; Kaplan, Robert <kaplan.robert@epa.gov>; Stepp, Cathy <stepp.cathy@epa.gov>; Chu, Ed <Chu.Ed@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Kelley, Jeff <kelley.jeff@epa.gov>; Rowan, Anne <rowan.anne@epa.gov>; Mattas-Curry, Lahne <Mattas-Curry.Lahne@epa.gov>; Drinkard, Andrea <Drinkard.Andrea@epa.gov>; Arrazola, Ignacio <arrazola.ignacio@epa.gov>; Asque, Gillian <asque.gillian@epa.gov>; Aultz, Erica <aultz.eric@epa.gov>; Ballotti, Doug <ballotti.douglas@epa.gov>; Kimble, Jeffrey <kimble.jeffrey@epa.gov>; Boone, Denise <boone.denise@epa.gov>; Chabria, Monesh <chabria.monesh@epa.gov>; Cisneros, Jose <Cisneros.Jose@epa.gov>; Clark, Jacqueline <clark.jacqueline@epa.gov>; Deamer, Eileen <deamer.eileen@epa.gov>; Dodds, Jennifer <dodds.jennifer@epa.gov>; El-Zein, Jason <el-zein.jason@epa.gov>; Frey, Rebecca <frey.rebecca@epa.gov>; Gangwisch, Bryan <gangwisch.bryan@epa.gov>; Guerriero, Margaret <guerriero.margaret@epa.gov>; Harris, Kimberly <harris.kimberly@epa.gov>; Harris, Michael <harris.michael@epa.gov>; Holst, Linda <holst.linda@epa.gov>; Johnson, Mark <johnson.mark@epa.gov>; Klassman, Debra <klassman.debra@epa.gov>; Korleski, Christopher <korleski.christopher@epa.gov>; Mangino, Mario <mangino.mario@epa.gov>; Mankowski, Matthew <mankowski.matthew@epa.gov>; Moore, Tammy <moore.tammy@epa.gov>; Morris, Julie <morris.julie@epa.gov>; Muniz, Nuria <Muniz.Nuria@epa.gov>; Nelson, Leverett <nelson.leverett@epa.gov>; Newman, Erin <newman.erin@epa.gov>; Peaceman, Karen <Peaceman.Karen@epa.gov>; Poy, Thomas <poy.thomas@epa.gov>; Prendiville, Timothy <prendiville.timothy@epa.gov>; Schupp, George <schupp.george@epa.gov>; Bair, Rita <bair.rita@epa.gov>; Tanaka, Joan <Tanaka.Joan@epa.gov>; Victorine, Gary <victorine.gary@epa.gov>; Williams, Thomas <williams.tom@epa.gov>; Wilson, Jennifer <wilson.jenniferA@epa.gov>; Zintek, Lawrence <zintek.lawrence@epa.gov>; Shoven, Heather <shoven.heather@epa.gov>

Subject: Wolverine clips, Feb. 13, 2018

Wolverine PFAS press clips

US EPA Region 5 – prepared by the Office of Public Affairs

February 13, 2018

MLive	Wolverine denies role in newborn's death; family blames PFAS dump
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http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2018/02/wolverine_denies_role_in_newbo.html

Wolverine denies role in newborn's death; family blames PFAS dump

Updated 10:07 AM; Posted Feb 12, 7:39 PM

By John Agar

PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP, MI - Wolverine World Wide denied allegations in a lawsuit it is responsible for the death of a newborn boy delivered early after his mother says she suffered pregnancy complications from drinking contaminated water.

The company asked all lawsuits in Kent County Circuit Court, including allegations related to at least two deaths, be dismissed. If the cases go forward, the company wants them included in a class-action lawsuit in federal court.

Wolverine is accused of disposing of polyfluoroalkyl substances called PFAS or PFCs, once used in 3M Scotchgard to waterproof shoes at its former Rockford tannery.

Attorney James Moskal said state and federal agencies are investigating the widespread contamination and the lawsuits would undermine efforts to "determine the scope of proper remedies."

The company expects to spend \$40 million this year addressing the contamination, which includes what's believed to be record PFAS levels in drinking water.

He said Wolverine acted appropriately under the law at the time when the chemical dumping in Plainfield Township took place.

"All acts and conduct of Wolverine, as alleged in the complaint, conformed to and were pursuant to statutes, government regulations and industry standards, based upon the state of knowledge existing at all material times alleged in the complaint," Moskal, an attorney for Warner, Norcross & Judd, wrote in court documents.

"At all relevant times Wolverine disposed of waste containing PFAS, it reasonably believed the waste to be safe. At the time Wolverine disposed of the waste, it was standard practice in the industry to dispose of waste in the same manner as Wolverine."

That argument is lost on Ashlee Naffziger. She developed severe preeclampsia, or pregnancy-induced hypertension, and underwent an emergency caesarean section at 36 weeks.

Her son, Hunter, needed to stay in utero for 37 weeks so that his lungs and body could develop enough to withstand surgery to fix a heart defect that doctors detected early on.

Preeclampsia has been linked in human studies to PFAS exposure.

"This case demonstrates the horrific consequences that Wolverine's widespread dumping of dangerous chemicals has caused: the death of a newborn child," Varum Law attorneys Perrin Rynders, Aaron Phelps, Kyle Konwinski and Paul Albarran wrote in an 89-page lawsuit.

They said the boy would have had successful surgery and been healthy if he wasn't born early. He wasn't ready for surgery, the attorneys said.

"After six-and-one-half weeks, the Naffzigers had to make the decision that no parent ever wants to make: care-of-life treatment or more surgeries, pain and life support. Because both choices would unfortunately end in the same result, the Naffzigers chose care-of-life treatment rather than subjecting Hunter to more pain and suffering."

The Naffzigers contended that Wolverine, over the course of decades, disposed of tannery waste into the ground, which the company knew would leach into the groundwater.

Last year, authorities told the Naffzigers and others that tannery waste had contaminated their water with PFAS.

"Unfortunately, the residents and their family members, including many children (some infants and some grown), have drank the contaminated water their entire life. Now, due to Wolverine's tannery waste contaminating drinking water, many residents who drank the contaminated water have health problems from drinking contaminated water."

Over 90 lawsuits have been filed in Kent County Circuit Court. The lawsuits are similar, with Wolverine's response identical.

Sandy Wynn-Stelt filed a wrongful death lawsuit. She lives across the street from the company's old sludge waste dump at 1855 House Street NE. Her husband, Joel R. Stelt, 61, died March 26, 2016.

The water sample from the Stelts' well in 2017 was "alarmingly high" and was "believed to be the highest concentrations of PFAS ever found in drinking water in the United States," the lawsuit said. An August test found PFOS and PFOA in Wynn-Stelt's well at 38,000 parts per trillion. Since then, state officials discovered a well in Algoma Township with PFOS and PFOA at almost 59,000-ppb.

Wynn-Stelt and her husband moved to House Street in 1988. They used a reverse-osmosis filter in the kitchen sink, but it did not remove all PFAS.

She has suffered anguish from her husband's loss. Now, she doesn't know what her future holds, the filing states.

"As far as (Sandra Wynn-Stelt's) emotional state goes, (she) is scared, anxious, concerned, has no peace of mind, and is completely discomforted as compared to her life just a few months ago."

The lawsuit said Wolverine knew decades ago it was dumping dangerous chemicals, even on farmland.

Residents contend they have suffered health problems, anxiety and loss of property values. One man, at a township board meeting, said: "The real estate values due to this Belmont Chernobyl are going to take a severe hit."

In a statement, Wolverine said its court filings on Monday, Feb. 12, "do not diminish the Company's commitment to working with the community to find long-term solutions."

"The groundwater issues facing our community are serious, and that's why the Company continues to work diligently with local, state and federal regulators to develop long-term solutions. That said, many of the allegations made by plaintiffs' attorneys in the state court lawsuits are misleading and are not supported by facts."

Wolverine asked for a stay in the state court cases to address issues raised in a federal case.

The Wolverine PFAS investigation began last year with discovery of contaminated wells near the company's old sludge dump on House Street in Plainfield Township. It has since spread to Algoma Township and the city of Rockford.

Exposure to PFAS chemistry has been linked in human studies to certain cancers, thyroid malfunction and other chronic diseases.

In January, the Environmental Protection Agency ordered Wolverine to conduct further investigation at the House Street dump and the company's former tannery grounds in Rockford, which are both contaminated by extremely high levels of PFAS.

Wolverine has been providing bottled water and whole-house PFAS filtration units to most homes in DEQ-established testing areas.

Meanwhile, Plainfield Township officials plan to borrow up to \$25 million to extend its municipal water system to areas with contaminated wells.

Moskal, the Wolverine attorney, said the case should be dismissed with plaintiffs joining a class-action suit in federal court.

"Before explaining why summary disposition is warranted, one threshold issue needs to be clarified: There is no imminent danger to anyone's health in the context of these cases."

He said that before Wolverine provided alternate water options, 34 of the 52 plaintiffs had levels of a subset of PFAS that were below federal drinking water advisories, and 13 had no detectable concentrations, he said.

"These 34 plaintiffs had safe water before any alternate water solutions were provided by Wolverine. ... Their water was and continues to be safe."

He said whole-home filters have been provided to 16 plaintiffs whose wells tested above federal advisories and state criteria while another has not responded to its offer.

Another is awaiting test results and is provided bottled water by Wolverine.

"In other words, the plaintiffs in these cases have safe drinking water, and there is no immediacy to the present litigation."

The attorneys for the plaintiffs said Wolverine ignored dangers and warning signs for decades. Twenty years ago, it was found that PFAS, an ingredient in 3M's Scotchgard, which was used by Wolverine, was toxic. 3M discontinued using PFAS, but Wolverine continued to "boast about its historical use of Scotchgard in its manufacturing process until just a few months ago, despite Scotchgard's damaging effects to the environment and to human health.

"Through the years, Wolverine was notified by concerned citizens, state officials and federal officials about the harmful effects of Wolverine's tannery waste (as if Wolverine did not know)."

http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2018/02/uncertainty_grips_families_liv.html

What it's like to live in the contaminated drinking water zones near Wolverine

Posted February 13, 2018 at 08:04 AM | Updated February 13, 2018 at 08:08 AM

By Neil Blake | nblake1@mlive.com

PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP, MI — Like a slow-moving avalanche, the toxic chemical pollution investigation north of Grand Rapids has upended the lives of hundreds of families living with the specter of contaminated drinking water.

The chemicals, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances called PFAS or PFCs, come from sludge waste generated by Wolverine World Wide's former tannery in Rockford, which used the chemicals to waterproof shoes for decades.

Last summer, those chemicals were found in private wells next to Wolverine World Wide's long-forgotten dump on House Street NE in Belmont. Less than a year later, more than 15 contiguous square miles across two townships and the city of Rockford are within a PFAS testing zone that includes about 1,500 properties.

MLive/The Grand Rapids Press spent some time recently with three families in northern Kent County living under a cloud of uncertainty. The health of their children and the value of their properties spark daily questions.

Meet the Carneys, the Ryfiak family and the Ravens.

Last fall, Jennifer and Lucas Carney learned their drinking water tested at 148 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFAS, about twice the Environmental Protection Agency's health advisory for two compounds called PFOS and PFOA.

A second test found PFAS at an even higher level. Copper and lead in their well also exceed federal limits.

The Carneys moved from Rockford into their home on Chandler Drive NE in Plainfield Township about seven years ago with their two kids, now ages 7 and 14. Jennifer Carney said she grieves anew each time she learns of more affected families.

"You know how they're feeling," she said. "Now they're feeling all of that doubt, like, 'Oh my God, I drank all of this water. How is my health? How is my family's health? My house is now worth nothing. What am I going to do for drinking, cooking, cleaning, bathing?'"

"It's just like reopening all those wounds," Jennifer Carney said.

'My son's been drinking it his entire life'

Tedd Ryfiak, a former U.S. Marine, lives on House Street in Belmont with his three kids.

Life was simpler last spring, before he discovered that his home was across the street from Wolverine's House Street dump, where total PFAS in the groundwater tested at nearly 52,000-ppt.

When Wolverine's consultant, Rose & Westra GZA, tested Ryfiak's water last July, it tested for the compounds at 1,440-ppt.

The company tested again, hoping for a lower result. The second test came back with higher levels — 2,220-ppt, about 31 times the EPA's health advisory level.

Ryfiak's concerns are for his three kids. He said they're healthy now, but he's concerned about their future.

"My son's been drinking it his entire life," he said.

Ryfiak moved into the home just four years ago. His youngest son is 3-year-old Teddy.

"He's only 3 years old, but that's the entirety — 100 percent — of his life," Ryfiak said. "And those are like the most important years of his life."

Ryfiak, like many others, is also concerned with the value of his property. He planned to live on House Street a few years, but not forever.

"Now, it's kind of looking like I might be stuck," he said.

Wolverine installed a water filtration system that's supposed to remove PFAS on the main line from the well entering his home. Ryfiak is skeptical of it.

The family continues to rely on an office-sized Culligan bottled system in the kitchen for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene. Ryfiak is waiting for testing to show the whole-house filter system is removing all the chemicals before he'll trust the tap again.

'This was our dream house'

Meghan and Zach Raven moved into their dream home in 2016.

Both graduates of Kendall College of Art and Design, the couple designed and built their home on property off Post Drive NE in Belmont.

A year later, news broke about pollution in the neighborhood. The Ravens stopped drinking their tap water and struggled to explain why to their two kids.

"It's zombie breath in the water," said their son Dexter, 5.

"Right now, our brand-new house is worth basically zero," Zach Raven said. "No one is going to be moving up here."

The Ravens are among dozens of homeowners in the area suing Wolverine through the Varnum Law firm.

"The home value thing is a big concern," Zach Raven said.

"I didn't ever think I would be in a position of suing anyone. That's not the type of people that we are. But this is a big deal."

'This is a life-changing event'

The Carneys were renovating their home last fall when the news broke. They live on a quiet, woodsy lot with a backyard pool that's been a gathering spot in the summer.

Their first PFAS test came back at 148-ppt. The second test was at 320-ppt.

They live about a half mile from Wolverine's House Street dump along the plume's presumed southeast path through Belmont toward the Rogue River.

Like Ryfiak, the Carneys worry about their children's health.

"I have two kids now that have been drinking this for seven years," Jennifer Carney said. "My daughter started drinking it at 6 months old. My son started drinking it when he was 7."

They are also wondering what to do about their pool. The state and local health departments say it's safe to use, but might that advice change someday?

"It's filled right now with 30,000 gallons of contaminated water," she said.

The long-term solution for families with polluted wells is to connect their homes to the Plainfield Township municipal water system — a multi-million-dollar infrastructure project the township began designing months ago to extend water lines.

But the Carneys aren't sold on connecting to "city water," because Plainfield's system isn't totally free of PFAS. The municipal supply is also contaminated, but at levels far below the EPA's health advisory threshold — about 6.8-ppt at last check.

The Carneys and many other Plainfield residents would rather see that level at zero before connecting to the system. They and others are also worried about other unregulated contaminants like hexavalent chromium and 1,4-dioxane that were found in township water at low levels several years ago.

The township is adding filtration to its water plant this year.

"We don't want the water main coming to our house right now," Luke Carney said. "Fix your problem before you keep putting more chemicals into my family members."

The couple have become active in a community of residents that helped spur the township into spending at least \$400,000 to install PFAS filtration at the water plant.

At a recent public meeting, the Carneys were among the last to leave.

"We got our test results the same day as three of our neighbors," Jennifer Carney said. "We all kind of lean on each other. We're not alone."

http://fox17online.com/2018/02/11/3-times-authorities-were-warned-about-water-contamination-near-north-kent-landfill/?utm_source=related_2

History of lead in water extends beyond House Street site

POSTED 11:13 PM, FEBRUARY 12, 2018, BY AHTRA ELNASHAR, *UPDATED AT 11:15PM, FEBRUARY 12, 2018*

PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP, Mich. -- Recent well test results from two homes near the House Street dump site, where Wolverine Worldwide dumped its waste for years, show extremely high levels of lead. While Wolverine denies any connection to these results, high levels of lead have previously been found at its dump sites.

According to a 1995 report from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, high levels of lead were found at the Boulder Creek dump site operated by Northeast Gravel Company, now the site of the Boulder Creek Golf Club. The lead was found in the precise areas where Wolverine left its waste.

Cody Angell, the leader of a Facebook group called Demand Action from Plainfield Township says it's time township leaders expand their concerns to address more than PFAS.

"It's not just about PFAS and PFOS, as we know," Angell said during Monday night's township meeting. "We want more. We want additional testing, and we want to know what's in our water now."

Along with high levels of lead, the 1995 report says tests also found dangerous levels of chromium and cadmium, a chemical that causes kidney damage at the plating and tannery waste areas at Boulder Creek. The levels were so high, they exceeded the DEQ's residential direct contact criteria, with the potential to leach into residential groundwater.

"We need to do something about it and be proactive, and I just believe in being proactive and take care of this before we haven't taken care of it and there are all these health problems that are happening," resident Grace Kneeshaw tells FOX 17.

Plainfield Township documents show officials were concerned as far back as 1971. The township supervisor at the time, Donald Lamoreaux, wrote a letter to the Kent County Health Department, saying in part, "We are vitally concerned that the wells of these homes may become polluted," referring to specific homes in the direction of the suspected groundwater flow at Boulder Creek.

Current township leaders have repeatedly denied FOX 17's requests to speak about the water issue in general.

So why did the state continue to allow Wolverine Worldwide to continue dumping at this site, even after being aware of these concerns? According to a letter written to a concerned pastor at a nearby church in 1979 by Rod L. Mosier, a supervisor for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the dumping was justified for three reasons: "No alternative has been available to Wolverine, work has been done to put together a proposal for upgrading, and no immediate problem of environmental degradation has been indicated."

Authorities were warned 3 times about water contamination near North Kent Landfill

As is true at many landfills, it was recommended that a cap be installed over the waste to make sure it didn't contaminate groundwater. FOX 17 spoke to Calvin College chemistry professor Mark Muyskens to find out exactly what that entails.

"The cap is intended to keep water from getting in, so even if there was something toxic in the landfill, if the water's not there to carry it away it's doing what the landfill's intended to do: keep it in a place," Muyskens said.

But according to that 1995 MDEQ report, there was still no cap installed at that time, after decades of dumping. It wasn't until reports following that year that a cap was put in, but Muyskens says that may have been too late.

"It's gonna mean whatever's in your landfill, it's gonna be exposed to water," Muyskens says.

Plainfield Township leaders say they are addressing the PFAS issue by looking for a new, clean well field and by installing a municipal filter, estimated to cost \$400,000. Before they install the filter, however, they'll need approval from the MDEQ and select a vendor.

Wolverine Worldwide continues to update the public on its side of the issue on its [blog](#).

<http://woodtv.com/2018/02/12/wolverine-asks-judge-to-dismiss-all-pfas-lawsuits/>

Wolverine asks judge to dismiss all PFAS lawsuits

Ken Kolker, Target 8 investigator Published: February 12, 2018, 5:09 pm

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (WOOD) — Faced with lawsuits claiming its PFAS contamination caused three deaths, as well as miscarriages, cancers and other illnesses, Wolverine Worldwide on Monday said it shouldn't be responsible for any of it.

The Rockford-based shoe manufacturer responded to 52 of the 89 lawsuits filed against it in Kent County Circuit Court. It asked a judge to dismiss them all.

That includes the case of Hunter Naffziger, who was 6 weeks old in May 2015 when he died from a heart defect. His parents claim Hunter didn't survive surgeries because preeclampsia caused by drinking PFAS-laced water in Algoma Township forced his mom to give birth too soon by cesarean section.

In its responses, Wolverine denied any wrongdoing, and denied as untrue that "animal and human studies have shown that PFAS can harm human health."

Wolverine used 3M's Scotchgard containing PFAS for several decades to treat shoes until 3M stopped using the chemical in 2002. By 2005, the EPA was calling PFAS a possible carcinogen. A study of 69,000 people in West Virginia found probable links to six diseases, including kidney and testicular cancers.

The 89 cases filed so far in Kent County Circuit Court have accused Wolverine of causing three deaths, at least nine miscarriages and leading to cancer and other illnesses in more than 60 people in Algoma and Plainfield townships.

PFAS contamination, blamed on Wolverine waste dumped decades ago, has been found in several hundred wells in those townships. At some properties, the levels are far above the state's limit for drinking water.

In its response to the lawsuits, Wolverine denied dumping tannery sludge illegally for decades, including at its House Street landfill in Belmont.

"At all relevant times Wolverine disposed of waste containing PFAS, it reasonably believed the waste to be safe," it wrote, adding the company followed "standard practice" at the time.

It denied that it should have taken action after 3M sent Wolverine a letter in 1999 warning of the potential harm of PFAS — a letter first revealed by Target 8.

Wolverine denied knowingly putting nearby residents at risk and said it had no obligation to warn neighbors.

The company asked the judge to dismiss the cases based, in part, on the 3-year statute of limitations, saying residents "should have known of any alleged PFAS contamination more than three years before" they filed the lawsuits.

Wolverine also says there is "no imminent danger to anyone's health" because it has provided either whole-house filters or bottled water to residents.

It asked the judge to dismiss the cases, in part, because they are similar to a federal class-action suit it already is facing. The company has already asked a federal judge to dismiss that suit.

http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2018/02/25m_bond_wolverine_negotiation.html

\$25M bond, Wolverine negotiation put township in 'uncharted waters'

Updated 2:51 PM; Posted 2:50 PM

By Amy Biolchini

PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP, MI - Facing public pressure to act, Plainfield Township officials are taking the necessary steps to borrow tens of millions of dollars as part of a plan to provide drinking water to hundreds of residents.

The township put out a notice in January that it plans to borrow up to \$25 million to invest in the municipal water system.

The move comes as an investigation into drinking-water contamination from old tannery waste from Wolverine World Wide has found toxic chemicals in private wells of hundreds of homes, some in Plainfield Township. The company used Scotchgard, a stain and water repellent that contains per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances known as PFAS.

The same chemicals were found in the township's municipal water system in 2013, and are still there today at levels far under federal consumption standards.

Township leaders are now looking to expand their drinking water system to hundreds of homes whose private wells have been impacted, as well as to add a filter to its water plant and drill a new well field.

To front the cost of the work - which could amount to five times the township's current water system budget - officials want to be able to bond up to \$25 million.

"People want to know that we're fixing this," said the township's lawyer, Doug Van Essen.

Paying off the bond won't fall to residents, said township Superintendent Cameron Van Wyngarden.

The township is negotiating a deal with Wolverine to get the company to pay for most of or all of the work -- putting the township in unfamiliar legal territory as it works to address the issue.

Out of sequence

The water main extension being pursued by Plainfield Township is unusual in several ways.

It is the biggest infrastructure project the township has undertaken in recent history, according to Van Wyngarden. The only other extensions of the township's water system were spurred by new development.

The township is also in unfamiliar territory as it negotiates a deal with Wolverine ahead of the conclusion of the investigation and the state's lawsuit.

"Honestly, there's no precedent for this," Van Essen said. "We're all in uncharted waters."

The township is pushing forward on what would typically be the final step of an investigation into environmental contamination by a company, Van Essen said.

"It's a very complicated matter, and it's being done a little out of sequence," Van Essen said.

Typically the extent of the pollution would have been completely defined and plans in place to both clean up the site and to help the individuals affected - all solidified by a court order, Van Essen said.

In this case, the investigation is still very active and the state just formalized the investigation with a lawsuit against Wolverine in January. The complaint seeks a long-term, reliable drinking-water solution for residents whose private wells have been contaminated.

Plainfield Township doesn't want to wait for that process to conclude, Van Essen said.

His argument: municipal water is the best long-term solution for residents living near the House Street dump - and Wolverine will likely be ordered to pay for it anyway in court - so why not start now?

"I don't think anyone wants to miss an entire year of moving a permanent solution along," Van Essen said.

Department of Environmental Quality spokesperson Melanie Brown declined to answer whether the DEQ supports the township's negotiations.

"...DEQ's immediate focus is on continuing to collect data so we can determine the full extent of the area of concern, ensure that interim alternate water supplies are provided to affected well users while studies continue, and use the data to determine where municipal water must be extended," Brown said in a statement.

The timing

At a certain level, Plainfield Township is pursuing swift actions as a matter of public relations, Van Essen said.

The township wants to install a \$400,000 granular activated carbon filter in its water treatment plant that would remove all PFAS from the drinking water system - the first of its kind in the state, and a move the township isn't legally required to take.

Van Essen said it's important that the township show the community it has a plan - which is why starting the project this year is so crucial.

"We're trying to show people that we're moving forward, we have actions in place," Van Essen said.

The township also needed to publish the intent to bond early this year due to a 90-day notice required of any actual bond issue.

The financing would need to be secured before work could begin, Van Essen said. With weather-dependent construction season in Michigan, Van Essen said the clock is ticking if the township wants to put pipes in the ground this year.

Should the township strike a deal with Wolverine this spring, officials want to be able to move quickly in selecting a contractor.

"We can't do it all in one year anyway, so why not get started on it?" Van Wyngarden said.

Van Wyngarden said work wouldn't begin unless there was a commitment from Wolverine to pay for it.

The projects

Meanwhile, the township has a mounting number of projects it is expecting Wolverine to pay for.

In a typical year, the township would spend from \$2 million to \$3 million on regular maintenance to its water and sewer systems, Van Wyngarden said.

The \$25 million figure attached to the bond notice is a high estimate and isn't the amount the township is asking Wolverine to pay, Van Wyngarden said.

The bond could cover a range of infrastructure improvements, Van Wyngarden said.

Those could possibly include drilling a new well field and purchasing and installing the PFAS filter at the water treatment plant, Van Wyngarden said.

The bulk of the cost will be the water-main extensions. The scope of the extensions are still a matter of negotiation with Wolverine.

Plainfield Township's water system includes 233 miles of water main pipes, and serves more than 40,000 people in the townships of Plainfield, Alpine, Algoma and Grand Rapids, as well as several customers in Walker.

The township has agreed to \$438,000 in engineering contracts to date to study five different expansion areas for its water system in neighborhoods affected by the House Street dump -- and Monday, Feb. 12, will consider another engineering contract for another possible expansion.

The township's director of public services, Rick Solle, said it's imperative that work begin first on a three-mile-long water main loop on House, Herrington and Chandler that was first studied in September 2017.

"This main would serve as the backbone for many of the other planned extensions as well as directly serving some of the homes that were most directly affected by the groundwater contamination," Solle said.

The township is also considering water-main extensions to three other areas it had surveyed: Herrington south of 10 Mile Road, Herrington south of Chandler and Belmont Avenue between Post Drive and Packer Drive.

In December 2017 another possible extension also presented itself: high levels of PFAS were found in the Wellington Ridge subdivision in Algoma Township. Those homes are 1,000 feet from a new home development behind the Meijer store on 10 Mile, where the township recently extended its water mains.

On Monday, the township board will consider a \$96,000 contract for engineering services to survey the area.

The negotiation

Plainfield Township officials have been adamant that they won't be footing the bill to extend the water system -- and that residents won't have to either.

"I don't think we're actually going to do the work unless we have an understanding with Wolverine," Van Essen said. "The people who are in the system shouldn't have to pay for this."

Whether the work comes to fruition seems to depend on decisions by Wolverine executives and state officials.

"Wolverine Worldwide has consistently said all options remain on the table related to water quality issues faced by our community and is open to a comprehensive answer where all parties participate in the solution," the company said in a statement to MLive.

Last week, Wolverine executives said they are budgeting \$40 million to put toward addressing the legacy contamination issues: \$30 million to \$35 million in the fourth quarter of 2017 to go toward ongoing testing and monitoring, bottled water for residents and in-home filtration systems and another \$8 million to \$12 million for 2018 consulting and legal fees and other expenses.

There may be other parties, however, that will be brought in to the negotiation.

Van Essen said the township may consider 3M and Waste Management to be responsible parties for the contamination. 3M is the manufacturer of Scotchgard -- the chemical used by Wolverine in the 1960s and 70s. Components of Scotchgard have been found in drinking water.

After toxic chemicals were found leaking from the closed State Disposal Landfill Superfund site off of East Beltline Avenue north of Four Mile Road into groundwater in 1985, landfill owner Waste Management paid for all of the costs related to the cleanup at the time.

Wolverine alluded to something similar in a statement to MLive: "As Plainfield Township has acknowledged, many parties contributed to the water-quality issues faced by the township and any solution must include all those entities and appropriate agencies."

<http://fox17online.com/2018/02/11/3-times-authorities-were-warned-about-water-contamination-near-north-kent-landfill/>

Authorities were warned 3 times about water contamination near North Kent Landfill

POSTED 9:40 PM, FEBRUARY 11, 2018, BY [AHTRA ELNASHAR](#), *UPDATED AT 10:28PM, FEBRUARY 11, 2018*

BELMONT, Mich. -- The Kent County Department of Public Works recently released [well monitor results](#) showing PFAS at levels as high as 237 parts per trillion near the North Kent Landfill, but according to decades-old state documents obtained by FOX 17, county leaders had plenty of warning that water there was in danger of being contaminated.

The Kent County Department of Public Works and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality are now coordinating well tests and providing bottled water to 47 nearby homes and businesses south and west of the North Kent Landfill. Dan Beemer and his wife were told their well was included.

"What else you gonna do?" Beemer tells FOX 17. "You know, it's just bad. Just one of those things. So, we'll see what our results come back in about four weeks."

The Beemers were given 35 bottles of water and \$100 in gift cards to buy more. They say they weren't told or given much else.

"They were gonna test for everything they're looking for now, they didn't say specifically," Beemer says.

This current contamination is something some might say was bound to happen.

Documents show that some Plainfield Township Board members, in a meeting in December 1977, expressed concern over the danger to the environment that the waste at the North Kent Site would pose. They urged county officials to do more research on the consequences of further dumping at the landfill. According to meeting minutes, county officials disagreed and sought immediate approval for businesses to dump there in order to avoid what they called an "economic crisis." They insisted that local businesses would be in jeopardy and could even face job losses if permission was denied. Those businesses included Master Finish Company, Keeler Brass, Grand Rapids Bright Metals, and Wolverine Worldwide.

"I didn't even know there was a landfill over there that Wolverine was using," longtime Belmont Avenue resident Leonard Kizer tells FOX 17.

In June of 1978, the township addressed a series of problems at the landfill. The township's records show those concerns went unanswered, and a state appeals board ignored multiple landfill violations.

Donald Lamoreaux, township supervisor at the time, wrote a letter to then-Attorney General Frank Kelly, writing in part, "We are extremely concerned since several streams and the ground water may be adversely effected by this waste. Water from refuse cells has been discharged into a Rogue River tributary since last fall and surface runoff has been running off site to the south thru (sic) a stilling basin."

In 2007, MDEQ documents show those fears became reality when the North Kent Landfill was found in violation of several conditions of its permit, including wastewater containing more than double the maximum limit of carbonaceous biochemical oxygen, which likely meant the wastewater was flowing more than allowed.

A woman named Sue, who asked FOX 17 not to use her last name, says she and her husband finished building their dream home a few months ago right in between the House Street dump site and the North Kent Landfill. "Before we moved in, Kent County has to give you the permit to move in. They first told us they weren't gonna give it to us. That was right after our house was built."

Sue says the county told her they were initially denied approval to move in because the water problem was so severe. "From what I understand, they're not giving any more permits for wells in this area, and I think we were one of the last ones," Sue says.

The Kent County Department of Public Works says the landfill was in compliance with state and federal regulations at the time, even though their own records prove otherwise. For nearly a year, beginning in September 1977, the North Kent landfill was unlicensed because of concerns over water contamination.

Wolverine Worldwide [recently announced](#) it will spend \$40 million to address the issue. They continue to update the public on [their blog](#).